



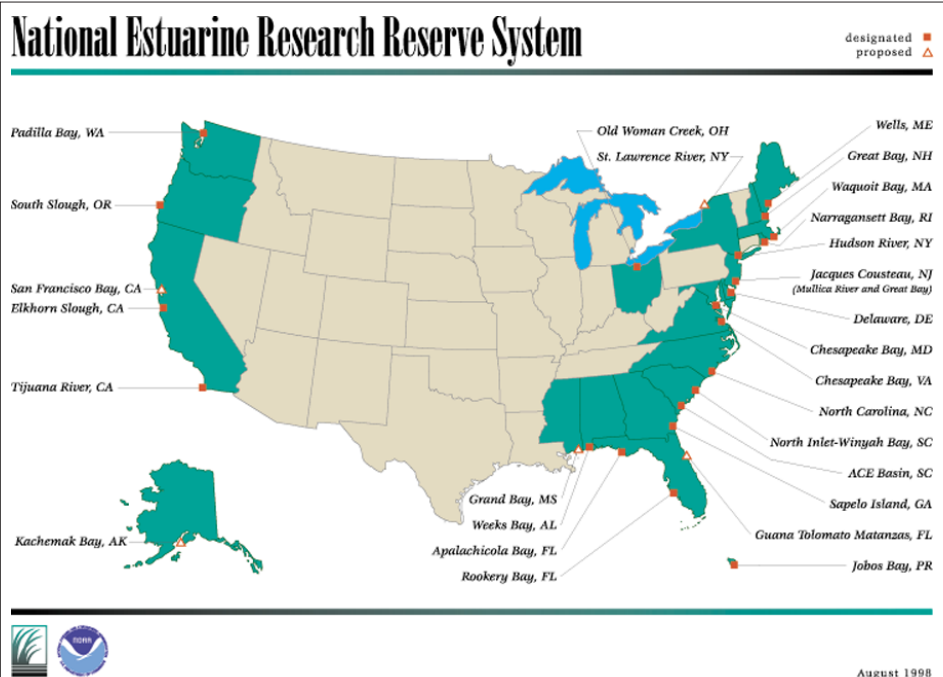
# NOAA FY 2000 Budget Request Fact Sheet

## LANDS LEGACY INITIATIVE



### National Estuarine Research Reserves System

NOAA requests an increase of \$14.7 million to enhance the protection of critical estuaries by providing funds to states and communities for acquiring lands in and around National Estuarine Research Reserves and for improving management capabilities and facilities at these sites. These funds will support the acquisition of forests and wetlands that help buffer Reserve resources from the impacts of development. This initiative also will strengthen Reserve management capabilities and enhance research, education, and resource stewardship in surrounding communities. The acreage in the System will more than double to over 1 million acres with the planned addition of three new Reserves (Alaska, Mississippi, and Florida) and the acquisition of additional properties from willing sellers, as well as conservation easements, at existing Reserves. In order to more fully protect the System of 25 Reserves, and expand the number of sites in the future, funds for land acquisition and management are essential. NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve System request is a key component of the



Map of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

Administration's FY 2000 Land Legacy Initiative, and complements other Lands Legacy investments seeking to help protect and restore our valuable ocean and coastal resources.

### Why Protecting Our Estuaries is Important

From the bountiful tidal creeks and productive wetlands of the Chesapeake Bay, to the mangrove forests of coastal Florida, to the mud flats and seagrass meadows of Washington state, the nation has been richly endowed with dynamic and thriving estuaries. These special coastal places provide habitat for many important species, act as nature's water treatment system, provide flood control and protection against storm damage, and are wonderful recreational areas. Despite their importance, these natural systems are in trouble. Estuaries are suffering from water quality problems, habitat loss, and declining habitat quality. Polluted runoff from farms and coastal development, harmful algal blooms, freshwater diversions, non-indigenous species invasions, and declining fish and wildlife abundance and diversity are some of the problems plaguing our estuaries. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System represents protected areas where we can better understand these problems and forge solutions with communities.

### NOAA Budget

FY 2000  
Change  
\$M

#### National Ocean Service

##### Ocean Resource Conservation and Assessment

(Coastal Dredging and Restoration)	\$10
(Coral Reef Restoration)	\$10

##### Ocean & Coastal Management

(Coastal Zone Management Program)	\$32
(National Estuarine Research Reserves System)	\$ 3
(National Marine Sanctuaries)	\$12

#### National Marine Fisheries Service

##### Conservation and Management Operations

(Fisheries Habitat Restoration)	\$23
---------------------------------	------

#### Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction Account

(National Estuarine Research Reserves System)	\$12
(National Marine Sanctuaries)	\$ 3

NOAA Lands Legacy Initiative - - Total \$105

# NOAA FY 2000 Budget Request Fact Sheet

## Responding to the Problem

The Reserve System was established to protect key coastal areas for scientific study, education, and resource stewardship. This initiative will help the System expand to over 1 million acres from the current half million acres, and strengthen the System's physical infrastructure by working with coastal communities and nonprofit organizations. Reserves have identified habitat critically in need of acquisition for resource protection, and for long-term science, education, and demonstration programs. Facilities and related structures, such as interpretive centers, laboratories, boardwalks, and boat docks, are crucial for carrying out these programs.

Examples of priority acquisitions for the Reserve System include: wetlands and seasonal grasslands at Elkhorn Slough, California; the Hither Island Sedge complex at the Jacques Cousteau Reserve at Mullica River, New Jersey; headwater forest lands at South Slough, Oregon; upland stream buffers under development pressure at Old Woman Creek, Ohio; and property for Reserve facilities near Beaufort, North Carolina.

In addition to land acquisition, these funds are needed for facility construction at three new Reserves at Kachemak Bay, Alaska, Grand Bay, Mississippi, and Guana-Tolomato-Matanzas, Florida. Examples of other priority projects at existing Reserves include: learning and training center at North Inlet/Winyah Bay, South Carolina; exhibit construction at the Delaware, Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, and Apalachicola, Florida Reserves; expansion and modernization of the Padilla Bay, Washington interpretive facility; and laboratory and dormitory space at Wells, Maine.

These funds also will strengthen management capabilities at Reserves. The initiative will enhance resource management, environmental monitoring, applied research, and education, and help support Reserve staff.



*Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.*



*Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve.*

## NOAA's Role

NOAA is the Federal partner in the Reserve System, as mandated in the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. More specifically:

- NOAA provides guidance and matching funds to states for land acquisition, construction, resource protection, research, and education and States operate and manage the sites.
- In consultation with Reserves, NOAA sets priorities for land acquisition, construction, and management such that the whole Reserve System will benefit.
- Through NOAA's leadership in shaping system-wide programs in monitoring, applied research, and education, the value of the whole Reserve System is greater than the sum of individual Reserve activities.
- NOAA helps ensure that the actions taken under this initiative are linked to and coordinated with state Coastal Management Programs.
- Finally, NOAA brings the full range of capabilities in resource management, research, assessment, and education to the important job of protecting the nation's estuaries.

---

For Further Information Contact:  
Brian Wheeler  
Office of Legislative Affairs  
(202)482-4981

---